

GIANT FULL-COLOR PINUP OF BRUNO SAMMARTINO!

January 1981
\$1.50

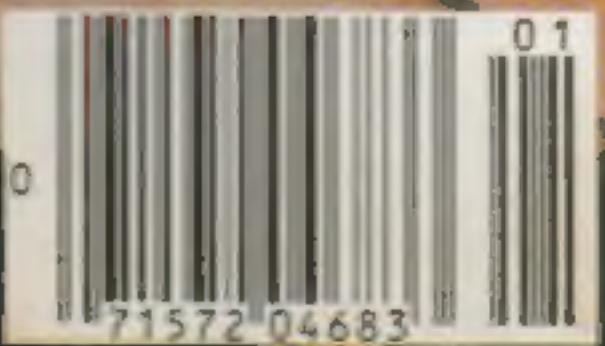
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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED



Spectacular Fan Contest:
**WIN A GENUINE
MIL MASCARAS
MASK!!!**

**HULK HOGAN'S BOAST:
"I'VE PROVEN
PAT PATTERSON
IS A COWARD"**



KING'S COURT

By Peter King

THE NWA BELT was placed strategically under the harsh ceiling light. The gold glistened and the jewels shone as Harley Race tilted it slightly. "I like the way it looks," Harley Race said, his voice no louder than a whisper.

"It's quite a trinket," I agreed. Race got up and paced the floor, not listening. We were in the dressing room area of Atlanta's Omni Arena. Race had just been victorious in a brutal title defense. He raised his right arm slightly and

winced. "Damn injuries," he muttered. He rubbed the arm and sat down.

"I have proven," Race began, his finger poised just inches from my face, "that I am the greatest champion who ever lived. Five times I've held this belt. Five times. A wrestler would sell his soul to win it once. He would kill his grandmother to hold it for a night. He would cut off a leg to have it for a second. I have held it five times!"

Harley Race was feeling cocky this night. Only a month before, during a trip to Japan, Race lost the title to Shohei Baba. Some thought Race's title reign had been ended permanently.

"I was never really worried. The only thing that concerned me was getting Baba in the ring again. My visa only had a couple of days to go. Do you know that Baba paid the Japanese government to try

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Harley Race and his prized possession, the NWA championship belt.

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

HARLEY RACE CLAIMED he was not upset about losing his NWA title to Giant Baba in Japan September 4th. Race had lost the title to Baba once before (in October 1979), but Harley regained the belt five days later. So Race saw no reason why he could not again regain his championship in the scheduled rematch six days later.

"I was a little worn out from that long haul to Japan," Race told PWI in an exclusive interview. "Baba is great, I won't take anything away from him, but I was not in top form when I met him. Losing to Baba made me even hungrier for the title again, that's why I was able to regain it. I am now a five-time champion. Five times. Just think of it. I am the greatest of all time." We must note that Race is creeping up on the record of Lou Thesz—the man who held the championship six times!

Southern Champion Dick Slater says he is getting very bored defending his title in Florida, but he is obligated to a long-term contract with the state promoters to defend there. "I wish there was a way out," Slater told us. "I am so sick and tired of the nothing competition here—Dusty Rhodes, the Brisco boys, Barry Windham. It makes me sick knowing that my great talent is being wasted on bums like them."

Mr. Wrestling II says he is shocked, but pleasantly so, with the news the Masked Superstar has changed his ways in the Mid-



Giant Baba is unconcerned about the gash on his forehead as he poses with a trophy awarded to him after taking the NWA championship from Harley Race. The happiness lasted but six days.

Atlantic region and become a fan favorite. "I hope it lasts," II notes. "I hear he is teaming with Ric Flair, Blackjack Mulligan, and other super guys there. You know me and Superstar don't see eye to eye on most things, but if he has

really seen the light like I hear he has, I want to shake his hand."

Dick Murdoch is mystified that Dusty Rhodes has declined to team with him on a regular basis. "Not at this time," Dusty has told him.

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DRESSING CONVENTION ROOM

By Stu Saks

REGARDLESS OF WHOSE side you take in the raging feud pitting Ole and Gene Anderson against brother Lars, its mere existence is a very sad fact indeed. To see what is going on, to see two brothers verbally and physically attacking a third brother, no matter what the reasons, brings my overall outlook on society down a notch. How can civilized people act this way? I wince everytime I see friends turn on each other (and it happens far too often in the emotional world of professional wrestling), but when I see it happening to brothers, well, that's devastating.

There is silence in the Anderson home these days. Where there once was the noise of three rambunctious boys growing up, now only Mr. and Mrs. Anderson remain. And now they are no longer on speaking terms. Their marriage of 50 years is threatened by the needless hatred that presently exists between their sons. Talk about devastating.

This was one of my most difficult assignments ever. A family, whose foundation was built on love for so many years, is a total mess. Not only were the brothers at each other's throats, but they were ruining their parents' relationship as well. Mr. Anderson sides with Gene and Ole, while Mrs. Anderson takes the side of the youngest son Lars. I thought a reporter was the last person they



Gene and Lars Anderson pose with a trophy and Southern tag team belts in 1970. What a difference a decade makes!

would talk to, but I was wrong. They were both quite open with me.

"If there's one thing I thought I taught all my kids, it's family loyalty," said Mr. Anderson, dumping the remnants of his pipe into an ash tray. "I don't think I could ever forgive Lars for turning away from his brothers."

Mr. Anderson is apparently unconcerned with the circumstances surrounding Lars' actions. The incident occurred during a tag team match, Dusty Rhodes and Ole Anderson vs. The Assassins. With each team permitted to select one referee, Dusty and Ole chose Gene Anderson and The Assassins chose Ivan Koloff. Suddenly, and without provocation, everybody, including his partner and the two

referees attacked Rhodes. Seeing this from the dressing room, Lars charged into the ring, presumably to aid the assault. To everyone's amazement, however, he came to Dusty's rescue.

As a result, Lars was banished from the family by Ole and Gene, who have vowed to run him out of the sport. The fans are all behind Lars, but the only Anderson that seems to understand his position is his mother.

"I taught my son [Lars] that above all else comes the ideal of fair play," said Mrs. Anderson, misty-eyed. "It breaks my heart what is going on. I cry myself to sleep at night, but I will never, to my dying day, ever blame Lars. He saw a good man [Rhodes] being beaten up and he did what he had to do. All I can ask myself, is where did I go wrong with the other two. The most important thing a parent can teach her son is the difference between right and wrong. I guess I failed."

"Right and wrong, she says?" Mr. Anderson asked. "When you talk right and wrong, you have to talk about Lars coming into the ring after his own flesh and blood. You have to help your own in this world or you won't last very long. Lars is finding that out the hard way. Foolish kid. If I was there, I would have whupped him myself."

Mr. Anderson is an angry man. He thought he had taught Lars a

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THE MORGENSTEIN REPORT.....

By Gary Morgenstein

HUMPERDINK NOW A VALET

There's been some peculiar moments in professional wrestling, but none stranger than the bizarre state of affairs which finds Sir Oliver Humperdink acting as Dusty Rhodes' valet. As the result of a Rhodes' triumph over Ivan Koloff, a member of Humperdink's family, the portly manager must serve as Dusty's personal valet. Any menial, humiliating task Rhodes wishes, Humperdink must perform. If Rhodes wants a huge breakfast, Humperdink must cook it. If Rhodes wants a door opened for him, Humperdink must open it. Anything Rhodes wants, he gets. Most doubted whether Humperdink would really follow, believing this unscrupulous man would



find some way to get out of this humiliating commitment. Yet to Humperdink's credit, he didn't back out. And I believe he deserves praise.

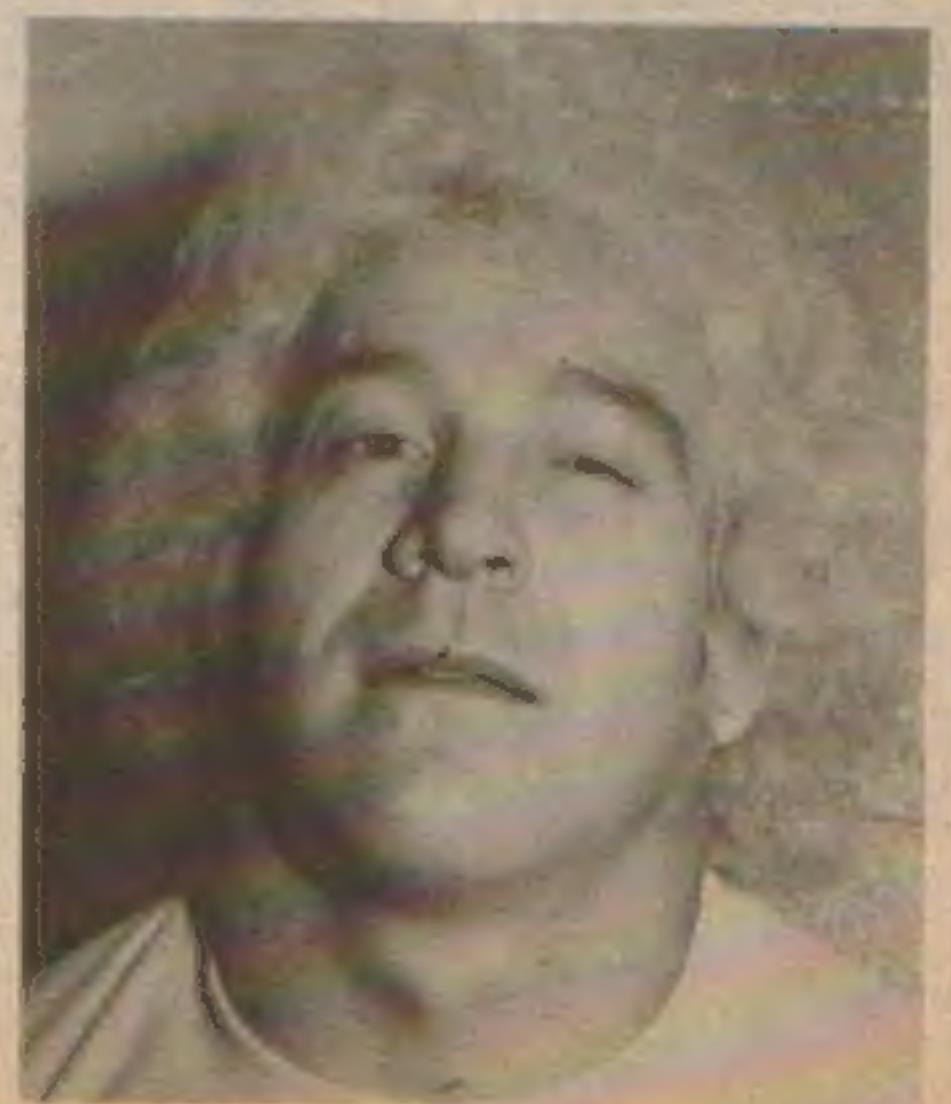
WHO'S NEXT?

Now that Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales' relinquished their WWF tag team title, the pressing question is: Who will succeed them as WWF champions? At this writing, a number of qualified teams tossed their laced boots into the ring. No definite pairings are set yet, but names like Tony Garea, Dominic DeNucci, Ric Martel, Ivan Putski, and, of course, former champions, The Samoans, lead a crowded pack. Undoubtedly, Morales will seek some partner to reclaim his short-lived title. The proposed tournament should prove to be one of the most exciting in recent memory. I'm taking The Samoans. They're wild, mean, barbaric, and, difficult as this is to write, led by a brilliant man, Captain Lou Albano.

PATERA CHARGES INTERFERENCE

For weeks, Ken Patera, current Missouri State and Inter-Continental champion, bragged how he'd bash NWA champ Harley Race's face into the mat. In the best two-out-of-three falls bout, Patera charged special referee Lou Thesz favored Race and allowed the NWA champion to get away with low blows and repeated illegal maneuvers. Thesz denied the charges. Race expressed bemused contempt. A special

review of the film open to the press revealed Patera's charges were uniformly unfounded. Thesz refereed perfectly and, if anyone were guilty of cheating, it was Patera. When confronted with the results of the review, Patera contended the film had been doctored. If every Patera-instigated charge of doctored films were true, wrestling matches would be held in the Mayo Clinic.



If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

TOP ROPE
Box 48
Rockville Centre, N.Y.
11571

OFF THE ROPE

By Dan Shocket

BEFORE EXAMINING THIS month's correspondence, let me state here and now that the Samoans will soon be the new WWF champions. Bob Backlund knew this when he ran scared from the title, giving it back rather than meeting the Samoans again. All those who wanted to write me about the title change, save your stamps for letters to Santa Claus. Now, let us begin.

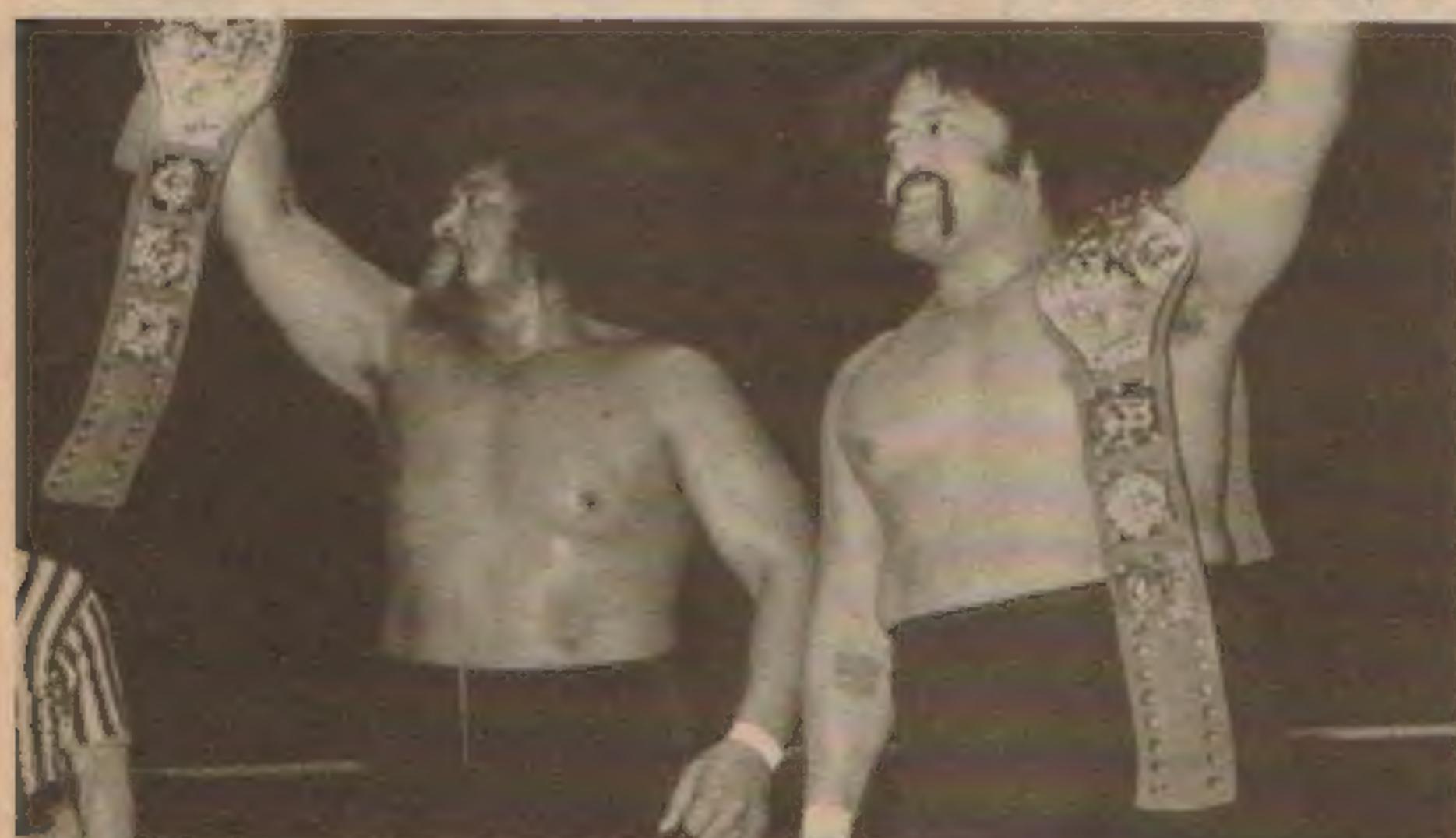
Dear Mr. Shocket,

Why do you say so many things about Larry Zbyszko?

Instead of being number one on the "most hated" list, he should be on the jerk list. On television, I saw him sneak-attack his former friend, and tag team partner, Tony Garea. A person who does such a thing doesn't deserve any compliments.

I think you should realize what a disgrace he is to the great sport.

MIKE BEAULE
Manchester, NH



As this magazine went to press, PWI learned that the Samoans won the WWF tag team elimination tournament, with a victory over René Goulet and Tony Garea in the final round.



According to Dan Shocket, Larry Zbyszko's attack on his former partner and friend, Tony Garea, was justified.

Dear Mr. Beaule,

Any friend who deserts Zbyszko at the man's time of greatest need deserves to be sneak-attacked? How do you define friendship? If you ask me, Garea turned his back on Zbyszko when Larry needed people to at least understand, if not agree with him. Because of this, Garea showed himself to be unworthy of any consider-



ation. Anyone who could still like Garea after this act of cowardice and betrayal deserves him.

Dear Mr. Shocket:

In recent months, you have been saying how much you don't like Rick Steamboat. I agree with you 100 percent.

I know you admire people like Ivan Koloff, Nikolai Volkoff, and the Samoans. But why don't you mention Mr. Excitement, the Southern heavyweight champion, Dick Slater? He said he was going to take the Southern title and he did. He backs up what he says. I think Dick Slater is the greatest wrestler in the sport today.

BOB ANTOINE
North Palm Beach, FL

Dear Mr. Antoine:

I have not purposely meant to slight Dick Slater. I have long admired the man's courage, ferocity, and skill. While I'm not sure he's the greatest wrestler in the sport, he definitely deserves a loyal fan following.

Dan Shocket,

I hate it when you and anyone like you says that Ric Flair should turn back into a rulebreaker. I like him as he is now.

I like him beating up wrestlers like Greg Valentine, John

Shocket has a lot of respect for Southern Heavyweight champion Dick Slater, who Bob Antoine feels is under-publicized.

Studd, and Jimmy Snuka. So, please Ric, stay clean!

ANDY ONORATA
Erie, PA

Andy Onorata,

There's nothing I can say to a man who considers Ric Flair currently at the top of his form. If you don't see the difference between his former magnificence and his current plodding, then it doesn't take much to make you happy. There are those of us who still mourn the passing of a genius into a clown.



Ric Flair gets the better of Jimmy Snuka in a battle of fingerlocks. Reader Andy Onorata prefers Ric as a good guy.

Dear Dan Shocket:

When will the wrestling public accept the greatness of Ken Patera? Here is an Olympic hero who time and again has proven himself against the likes of Pat Patterson, Tony Atlas and Kevin Von Erich, yet both writers and fans label him rulebreaker. Ironically, Ken always falls victim to that outlaw, Bob Backlund, every time they meet, since Backlund consistently pays off the referees to make decisions go in his favor.

That Einstein of wrestling, Grand Wizard, has been



Shocket agrees with John Riley that Ken Patera will soon be WWF champion.

attempting to enlighten the public all along about Ken Patera, but as Fred Blassie says, "Pencil-neck geeks can never learn to appreciate a truly great wrestler."

When Ken Patera adds the WWF belt to his growing collection, I will not be astonished. It will be undeniable proof that he, not Tony Atlas, deserves the title of Mr. USA.

JOHN RILEY
Vienna, VA

Dear Mr. Riley:

Fred Blassie is right. However, fans will have to appreciate the fact Ken will someday be WWF champion, no matter what they think of him personally. □

**Every month, three reporters from
PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED
will participate in an
incisive press conference with
a top wrestling star.
The questions will be demanding.
And the answers will reveal
the innermost thoughts of
the giants of the sport**

**PRESS
CONFERENCE**

DUSTY RHODES

(By now, all wrestling knows of Dusty Rhodes. Fans know of Rhodes' early career as a member of The Outlaws with

Dick Murdoch. Fans know of Rhodes' steady conversion to a personalized blend of stunning scientific maneuvers and old-

fashioned roughhousing. Fans know of Rhodes repeated disappointments as title after title slipped through his grasp. Fans know of Rhodes' moment of triumph over Harley Race last year in the NWA title match, of his dispiriting loss, of his persistent climb back. All the time, Rhodes never deviates from his basic benevolent manner. Success hasn't spoiled Dusty Rhodes. But will Dusty's failure to wrestle the title from Race destroy him? Managing Editor Bill Apter, Associate Editor Gary Morgenstein, and veteran journalist Matt Brock confronted Rhodes with this and other questions in this month's PRESS CONFERENCE.)



"I'm the only one who gives Race any kind of competition. After a while, he's gonna get lazy wrestlin' people not as good as me. His game'll suffer and he'll get sloppy and he'll lose his title . . ."



BILL APTER: Dusty, how's your mental attitude these days?

DUSTY RHODES: Angry, Bill. I'm not ashamed to admit I'd like to tear Race's head off his shoulders.

APTER: Why?

RHODES: Because I'm fed up with that no-talent bum cheatin' me out of the NWA title. I still don't believe he didn't have anythin' to do with Terry Funk breaking my arm last year so I couldn't defend the title. If Race'd been a decent kinda guy, I wouldn't think that. But he's an over-the-hill, washed-up bum who can only keep his title through cheatin'.

GARY MORGESTEIN: Is Race's attitude the reason you refuse to wrestle him while he

holds the NWA title?

RHODES: Better believe it. I'm sick of wastin' my time, fightin' and wrestlin' my heart out only to know that somehow, Race'll deny me the belt. That Tampa match was the last straw. I won the bout before thousands of people fair and square and he deprives me. Well, it ain't gonna happen anymore.

MATT BROCK: Dusty, I've seen a lot of feuds and a lot of careers ruined because of them. Are you worried this feud will ruin you?

RHODES: Only person it's gonna ruin is Race.

BROCK: If you refuse to wrestle Race, how's it going to ruin him?

RHODES: I'm the only one

who really gives Race any kind of competition. After a while, he's gonna get lazy wrestlin' people not as good as me. His game'll suffer and he'll get sloppy and he'll lose his title to someone not half as good as him who doesn't have any business holdin' the title, kinda like what happened with Muhammad Ali and Leon Spinks.

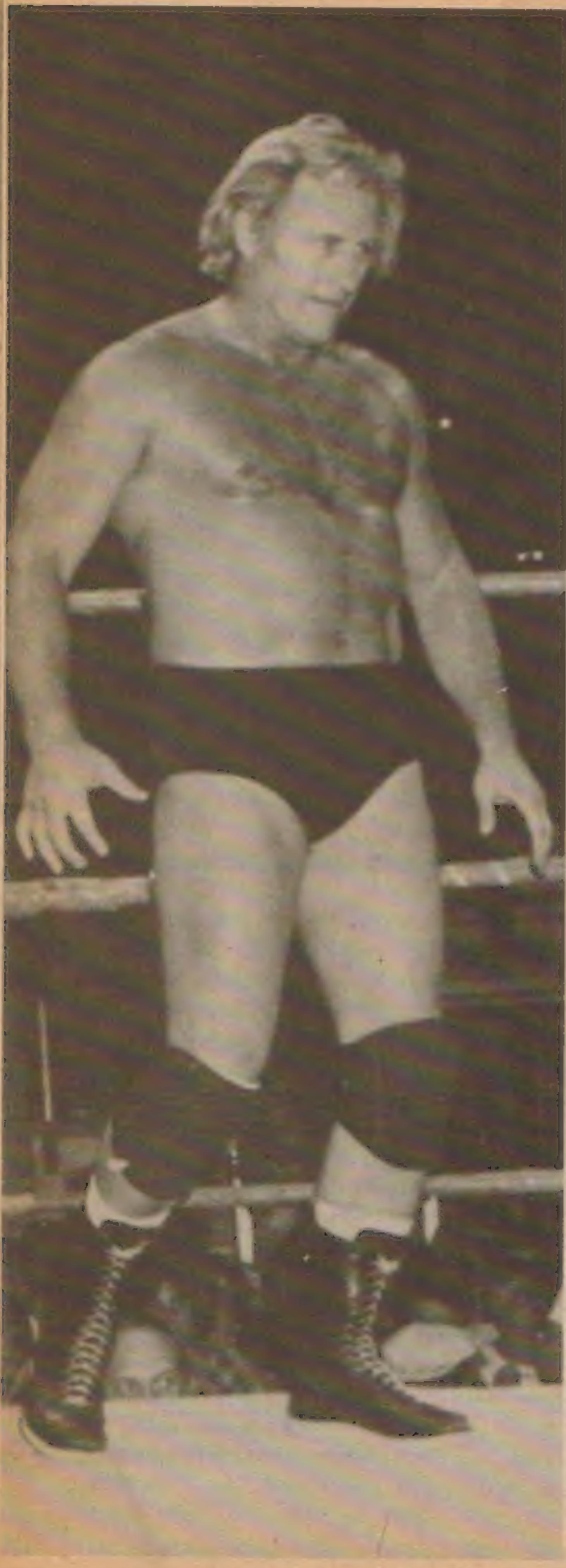
APTER: An interesting theory.

RHODES: I think so.

MORGESTEIN: Since you won't wrestle Race, who do you go after now?

RHODES: I've got my sights set on the Southern title held by that worm Dick Slater. Far as I'm concerned, the Southern title is one of the most

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BOCKWINKEL ORDERS HEENAN: "GET IN THE RING AND"



For the first time in five years, Nick Bockwinkel enters the ring without a championship belt (left). Greg Gagne stuns Nick with a right (above). Bobby Heenan uses a rare legal hold against Greg (below).



A DISTANT LIGHT bulb spun a pathetic, pin-like ray upon the two heads. Down the hall and off to the right, the hearty victory celebration of new AWA champion Verne Gagne raged. Laughter twirled gaily with the popping of champagne corks. The entire hallway was filled with mocking joy.

Nick Bockwinkel sighed

Finally, the long-awaited rift punctured the Nick Bockwinkel-Bobby Heenan mystique. All it took was that first loss, the distressing defeat to Verne Gagne in the AWA title match. Then bitterness erupted between Bockwinkel and Heenan during a tag team match. Is it temporary?

SHOW ME!

and leaned against the filthy wall beneath Chicago's Comiskey Park. He sipped on a beer, his gestures mechanical, his eyes glazed.

"We lost, Bobby. That old bum beat us."

"Did it illegally," responded Heenan, nervously eyeing his wrestler.

"Still lost it. What can you do when someone hits you illegally and tries to choke you?"

"Nothing." Heenan slapped his shoulder. "Couldn't do nothin'. Well, maybe . . ."

"What?"

"I just said, maybe there were a few things you coulda done differently, you know, there were some moves you missed. Nicky, look, I'm your best friend, I wouldn't lie to you."

With an expression of startled disgust, Bockwinkel laid his half-empty beer can on the floor and walked away. Heenan chased after him.

The seeds of discontent found fertile soil in Bockwinkel's distressing loss to Verne Gagne this summer. For years, specu-



Bockwinkel's gesture shows exactly what he thinks of the strategy his manager is employing against Gagne. Bockwinkel's relationship with Heenan has been strained since Nick lost the AWA title to Verne Gagne.

lation persisted that personalities must conflict. But Bockwinkel and Heenan it didn't happen. would inevitably quarrel. Even when Heenan was Surely such volatile per- banished from the AWA for



Bockwinkel looks up at Heenan as he applies an armlock on Gagne (above). Nick backs Crusher into the corner where Heenan could land some shots from behind (left). Gagne rams his head into Heenan's midsection, doubling Bobby over (below).



attacking association president Stanley Blackburn, they kept up their friendship and vowed to resume the team once Heenan's suspension ended. Again, the rumors persisted that Heenan wouldn't be asked to manage Bockwinkel. Again, the rumors proved false.

But it was easy to stay calm and friendly on the waves of success. There wasn't much room for disagreement when Bockwinkel demolished foe after foe. And there wasn't much room for discord when Heenan's shrewd strategies foiled all opponents.

Then came the loss. And Heenan's comments stung. Bockwinkel didn't say anything, but it hurt him. Bockwinkel's a proud man and a comment like that, sheathed in criticism, planted the first seeds of irritation.

Full harvesting wouldn't come until Heenan and Bockwinkel met Verne Gagne and Crusher in a brutal tag team match.

A curious spectacle greeted onlookers shortly before the match. Heenan and Bockwinkel huddled a few feet from ringside, evidently planning strategy. Suddenly Bockwinkel twisted away, stepped back and raised his hands in fighting position. Heenan stared puzzledly, placed his palms on his hips, and shook his head. Bockwinkel glanced around, dropped his hands, and edged back toward Heenan. The huddle was broken.

"He started telling me not to screw up again like I did in Comiskey Park," recalled Bockwinkel. "I almost popped him."

"I was just trying to make sure both of us knew the strategy and no one deviated from the strategy," Heenan said.

It's quite an understatement to say Crusher and Verne Gagne hated Bockwinkel and Heenan. All pre-match publicity focused upon the deep, almost fanatical contempt these teams held for each other.

Yet the story of the match had very little to do with the actual match. The increasing friction between Bockwinkel and Heenan furnished much of the human drama. Repeatedly, Bockwinkel would attempt a maneuver, only to have Heenan shout a contrary instruction from ringside. Once Heenan attempted a hold, Bockwinkel would yell something at him.

At one point, Bockwinkel, flushed with rage at a Heenan command, whirled around and shouted, "Get in the ring and show me!" Heenan didn't.

Afterwards, Bockwinkel

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

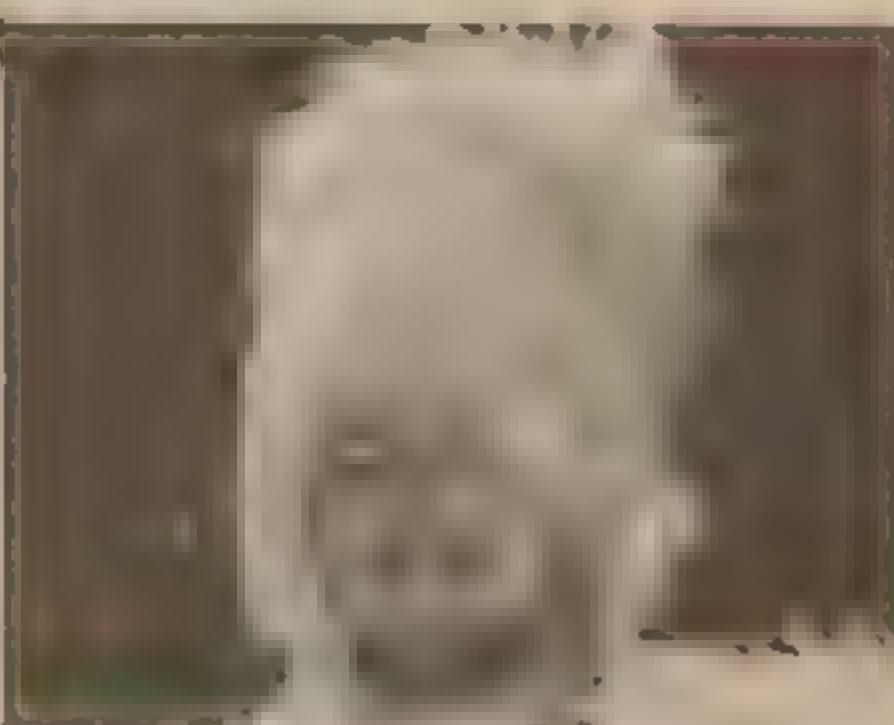
DENNIS CORDEY

"Well, what could I say? Winning the Georgia Heavyweight title had to be the greatest moment of my life. I can't possibly describe the exhilaration of that incredible moment you're standing in the center of the ring knowing you're the very best around."



NIKOLAI VOLKOFF

"No, winning the Florida tag team title from Jack and Jerry Brisco was not too difficult. You must understand how tedious it is wrestling cowards. They refuse to fight and you must continually chase them around the ring. Ivan and I spent more time chasing the Briscos than wrestling them."



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

"What will I do next? Doggone, I don't know. Just destroying that Frankenstein, Zbyszko, felt good. That was a big weight off my chest. But I honestly don't know what my next move will be. Yes, people have approached me about wrestling Bob Backlund, but I don't know. I need a while to gather my thoughts."



BRUISER

"Nicky Bockwinkel? Old garbage. Where the hell does he come off thinking he could whip a real pro like me? No way. I wanna get Bockwinkel in the kinda match he can't hide. I want more than a steel cage. I want guys with guns standin' outside the ring, ready to blow away the first guy who acts like a coward. And it ain't gonna be me."



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Steve Keirn's Message

"DON'T TEAM WITH ME AGAIN!"



Mr. Wrestling II and Steve Keirn, a confident pair, pose before the contest (above). Keirn will be forced to release his headlock as he is whipped into the ropes (left).

THE SILENCE WAS a refuge. Neither Steve Keirn nor Mr. Wrestling II wanted to hear what had to be said.

They went to the showers, allowing the streaming water to drown out even their thoughts. Emerging, they towed dry and dressed in silence. Every so often, their eyes would meet and both would turn away.

Mr. Wrestling II had his hand on the door when Keirn's voice stopped him. "Don't team with me again," Keirn declared. "We both know why."

Mr. Wrestling II nodded. He wanted to say something else, but couldn't think just what. For a moment, he considered having dinner with his tag team

To Mr. Wrestling II:

TH ME AGAIN I'

What possessed Steve Keirn to make such a statement? Here is Mr. Wrestling II, a man of infinite wisdom and decency, teaming with young Steve Keirn, a man of unlimited skills and potential. Yet Keirn expressed unhappiness. Why?

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS



As a worker makes sure the cage's gate is operable, II and Keirn glare across the ring at their opponents (top). Keirn applies an excruciating leglock (above).

partner—his former tag team partner. It would be a nice gesture, Keirn would accept, but neither man would enjoy it. As the evening proved, Steve and Mr. Wrestling II had to go in different directions.

There had been so much promise, so much hope. When the pair joined forces to wrestle the Assassins, each man assumed this would be the combination to drive the hated tag team out of wrestling. In the gym, Steve and II worked together brilliantly. Every maneuver had a style and rhythm that was exceptional. Spectators believed they were watching the destroyers of the Assassins.

During the match, it all unraveled. There were moments of greatness, but there was no promise of better things to come. There was no spark, at least not equal to the fury generated by the Assassins.

Before the match was over, you could see that Steve and II knew they were doomed. They might win the match (it ended in a draw), but they could never truly conquer the Assassins. Both

(Continued on page 64)

HULK HOGAN'S BOAST:



**"I'VE PROVEN
PAT PATTERSON
IS A COWARD!"**

Pat Patterson has been accused of many things in his life. But one thing no one ever called Patterson was a coward. Now Hulk Hogan, a man of immense size and an even bigger mouth, declares Patterson is afraid to wrestle him. Rest assured Patterson won't take that kind of criticism lightly

PHOTOS BY STU SAKS



Hulk Hogan scissors Pat Patterson and pulls back on his chin (above left). Patterson fights back and fires away at Hogan as he lies helplessly between the ropes (above). Pat drops to the mat with Hogan's legs knotted in a figure-four (below).



THE LAUGH FILLED the room like a blast of tear gas. It seemed possible to choke on the evil revealed by this howl of cruel glee. Once you hear Hulk Hogan's laugh, it's something you try very hard to forget.

The cause of Hogan's glee was quickly revealed. He had just received a list of where WWF wrestlers were scheduled to wrestle for the next month. One name was conspicuous by its irregularity.

"My, my," Hogan boomed in that unique voice of his, "where-oh-where has Pat Patterson gone? Where-oh-where can he be? With his nerve cut short and his yellow streak cut long, where-oh-where can he be?"

Hogan stomped over to the mirror and admired his reflection. After studying his huge body with delight, he continued, "No wonder the coward took the first bus to anywhere else. Once he got in the ring with Hulk Hogan, he knew the WWF was no place for him to keep his health. Am I right, rodents?"

The "rodents" were reporters invited by Hogan to attend "the most important press conference in the history of wrestling." No one was too excited, as all Hogan's press conferences are described by him as the most important in history. Usually, they're nothing more than lectures on why Hulk Hogan is the greatest thing to happen to wrestling since the invention of the mat. This time, though, there seemed to be a real story.

"The proof is right there!" Hogan exclaimed. "Patterson is not wrestling regularly in the WWF. It's no coincidence he is running like a scared rabbit after wrestling me."



Patterson, who still remembers one or two dirty tricks, chokes Hogan with a string (above) and drives Hulk's leg into the ringpost (below). Has Hulk Hogan proven Pat Patterson is a coward?



"Patterson is one of the most respected professionals in the sport—at least he used to be. Today, of course, he's one of the most notorious cowards. Think of all the men he's wrestled. The best! He wasn't scared of any of them. But he's scared of me.

"I'm even better than I thought. To be modestly honest, I thought I'd have to wrestle Patterson three times before he turned tail and ran. To have it happen after only one match

shows I'm the most dangerous guy around.

"Patterson used to say how much he loved the WWF. How many times have you heard him say, 'I'll wrestle here until I retire?' Then he wrestles me and cuts down drastically on his schedule. I want the world to know what I did to Pat Patterson."

Hogan had a right to be surprised. His match against Patterson had not been that devastating. Many who saw it

predicted Patterson would do much better the next time the two battled. They assumed the rematch would be soon.

Now, it seems Patterson is phasing himself out of the area, for whatever reason. According to the WWF home office, "Pat Patterson asked to be released from many of his contractual obligations for two months. As the reason was personal, we cannot reveal it without his permission." It took over a month to find Patterson and get that permission. In the end, it wasn't worth the effort.

"The reason I cut down," Patterson hedged, "has nothing to do with Hogan. At this time, I can't reveal why or who is responsible. It's just a coincidence I had to leave after wrestling Hogan. Be reasonable. Hogan is a mediocre athlete who thinks height is a substitute for ability. If I was fleeing anybody, it certainly wouldn't be Hogan."

Are you fleeing anybody?

"I can't say."

Will you have to leave?

"I can't say."

Aren't you afraid not revealing the reason will make Hogan's claim more credible?

"I can't say if I am leaving. What Hogan makes of my schedule is beyond my control."

When will you be able to reveal your intentions?"

Patterson stared off into space for over a minute. When he spoke, his voice was soft and empty. "I don't know when I'll be free to speak. It may be never."

When Hogan heard of Patterson's response, that same horrible laugh filled the room.

"Sure he can't say if he's leaving," Hogan exclaimed, "because he doesn't want to admit he's a coward!"

Hulk Hogan tells crowds of his accomplishments. Somewhere, alone, Pat Patterson waits for a time that may never come. □



CLOSE-UP

BRUNO SAMMARTINO



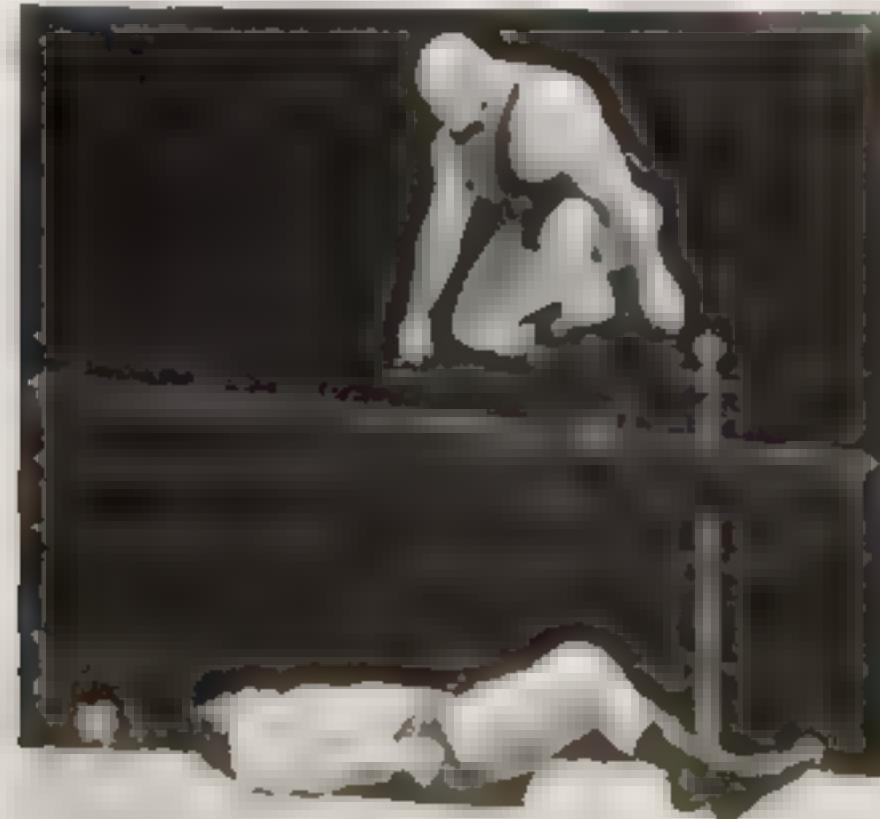
BRUNO SAMMARTINO DESERVES the title "Living Legend" . . . First gained national recognition when he shocked Buddy Rogers in 48 seconds for the WWF title in 1963 . . . That started an unprecedented eight-year title reign . . . Sammartino met every top wrestler in the world, never once backing off from a match . . . As Sammartino's wrestling success continued, his worldwide popularity increased . . . Soon the name Bruno Sammartino became synonymous with professional wrestling excellence . . . Sammartino's matches with deranged, envious rulebreakers ensnared him in many brutal feuds . . . Among the bitterest feuds were those with Larry Zbyszko, The Sheik, Killer Kowalski, and Bill Miller . . . On January 18, 1971, tragedy struck Sammartino as

Ivan Koloff captured the WWF title, ending his first glorious reign . . . But Bruno would not be stopped from regaining his cherished belt . . . He defeated then-champion Stan Stasiak and held the belt for five more years before losing to Superstar Billy Graham in a disputed decision at Baltimore in 1977 . . . Though no longer champion, Sammartino continued to delight crowds . . . After a self-imposed period of semi-retirement, Sammartino made a triumphant comeback . . . Bruno faced a variety of foes until Larry Zbyszko, friend and protege', turned on his former mentor and precipitated one of the worst feuds in wrestling history . . . The feud was finally settled in Shea Stadium this past summer . . . Bruno Sammartino, Wrestling's Living Legend, now looks for new worlds to conquer. □

CLOSE-UP

FAVORITE HOLD

"You know, when I first started, I loved using the bearhug. Nothing gave me greater pleasure than to use my strength to beat another man. But nowadays these young punks get out of the hold by eye-gouging. So I have been using more and more armlocks as time goes by to protect my eyes."



GREATEST MATCH

"Doggone, I don't think anything beats the first world championship match. And my first was with Buddy Rogers in the old Garden. I remember the date very clearly, May 17, 1963. I beat Rogers in 48 seconds. Nothing will ever compare with that feeling."



TOUGHEST MATCH

"My toughest match had to be against Ivan Koloff when he beat me for the WWF title on January 18, 1971. I will never forget how helpless I felt lying on the mat watching that big creep come flying off the top rope and landing on me with the Russian Drop."



MOST HATED

"Well, you know, there have been a few of those. But I'd say the one man who has inspired the most hatred in me has to be that Frankenstein monster Larry Zbyszko. You know, I never thought I could hate a man as much as I hate Zbyszko. I only regret he was able to walk out of the steel cage at Shea Stadium."

Eventually the rigor of defending a championship belt wears down even the hardiest of men. Bob Backlund is no exception. But Backlund discovered a way to relax, to release the unnerving emotions which build over a period of time. Down in Florida, Backlund is away from the pressures of being a WWF title-holder

BOB BACKLUND -

PHOTOS BY PAUL BAUMAN



TRAPPED
ON A
DEAD END
HIGHWAY



THERE COMES A time in every long distance car trip when diner coffee turns bitter. Too many cups, too many miles, too many hours without sleep turn your tastebuds into traitors. Your body rebels against the ordeal of travel.

Bob Backlund was familiar with the feeling. As dawn fell upon Interstate 95 in Georgia, the WWF champion knew he had arrived at that time in his journey. He tried to find a radio station that played music to stay awake by. All he could get was static and a station that played 30 different string versions of "My Way."

Bob didn't have to drive from New York to Florida. He certainly didn't have to take it non-stop. There was plenty of time to get there rested. But that wasn't the point.

There had been these trips



Note Backlund's body position as he executes this armdrag takedown on Muraco (above). With his weight shifted to his toes, he adds tremendous force to the maneuver. Bob escapes this front headlock by simply lifting Muraco over his back (below). Florida mat fans saw Backlund at his best

before; long drives on straight highway with a destination hours and hours away. The first time was in college. It was after wrestling season, perhaps the most grueling months in his life. He'd done well, but it was over. Not knowing why, he got into his car and drove. There was no eventual destination and no time limit. A friend who joined him, a man who had needed these trips before, told him, "There are times when you've just got to go from here to there."

This time, Bob knew where he was going and why. He had to wrestle Don Muraco in Florida. Still, there was no need to push, no need to get there immediately. There was a need to get back on the road.

Life had been pressing in on Bob. As WWF champion, pressures and responsibilities were making him feel trapped. To add to this, there was the



incredible tension of his tag team match joining Pedro Morales against the Samoans. Bob had won that, but only his friends knew at what cost.

Finally, there was the horrible moment when he had to resign the tag team title. No one felt as badly as Bob about it. He considered it a betrayal of Pedro Morales, even though his partner said he understood and fixed no blame. Bob never forgave himself.

A close friend says Bob told him, "Have you ever hated yourself? It's a horrible feeling. I made a mistake, thought I could defend two titles, but Pedro is paying for it. It doesn't matter if he blames me or not. I blame me."

Then Bob signed to wrestle in Florida. Without really thinking about it, he got in his car and drove. He drove through the day and night. All alone on the long, long highway. It seemed as if there

was no place to go but further.

Finally, the coffee tasted bitter and he knew he had arrived. It wasn't a place but a place in time. He had pushed himself to the limit; after this came numbness. For miles and miles, Bob would be numb.

He arrived at his motel room as the sun was setting. Every muscle was stiff, his senses were clear as only overexhaustion can make them. A strange giddiness filled him. He took a hot shower, lay down on his bed, and stared at the ceiling. Before he knew it, he was fast asleep.

Bob didn't awaken until the next morning. He was rested, starving, and filled with energy. He hurried to the motel diner and devoured a huge breakfast. He was feeling as he wanted to feel. The ride was successful.

That afternoon, Bob went to the arena to check everything out. Like any professional, he examined everything carefully. However, there was something sharper than usual about his

Backlund directs his attack to his challenger's left arm. Planting both feet, Bob yanks on the arm (above). He then applies a hammerlock (right) and an armbar (below). With all the tensions and pressures behind him, Backlund had one of his most stunning title defenses



examination. People who saw him knew Muraco was in big trouble.

When the moment for the battle arrived, Bob couldn't have been more ready. The stiffness in his muscles was gone. His head was

(Continued on page 63)

★★★★★ **WRESTLING** ★★★★★**ENQUIRER** ★★★★★**BACKLUND
TOPS RACE**

**Capacity Crowd In New York Sees
Race Fall By Disqualification**

BY STU SAKS

NEW YORK, NY—This was the match WWF champion Bob Backlund had been waiting for a long time. Though Backlund and NWA champion Harley Race met before, this was the first time these two men confronted each other in Backlund's home WWF territory.

RACE FALLS

Despite Race's repeated efforts to physically intimidate and, in

desperation, emotionally intimidate Backlund, the NWA champion wound up getting disqualified for pushing the referee.

"I'll wrestle him again," said Backlund. "And I don't care if he does cheat. I understand a man like that doesn't know how to wrestle any other way but by cheating. You almost have to feel sorry for someone with that kind of mentality."



LISTEN HERE: Jack Lotz lectures Harley Race before handing back his NWA belt. Race was disqualified for

Rhodes To Team With Humperdink?

BY GARY MORGENSEIN

TAMPA, FL—In a shocking move, rumors gain credible substance and point to the previously unlikely possibility of Sir Oliver Humperdink managing former arch-rival Dusty Rhodes. In recent weeks, Humperdink's fiendish army has



HELPING HAND: Sir Oliver Humperdink tends to an injured Dusty Rhodes. Has Humperdink changed his ways?

disbanded and scattered to the different parts of the nation. Additionally, Lord Al Hays arrived on the Florida wrestling scene to offer Humperdink substantial evil competition.

Though both Rhodes and Humperdink deny the stories, it is increasingly apparent Humperdink has reformed and decided to follow the path of scientific wrestling.

Valentine Vows "No More Title Shots For Flair"



LAST CHANCE Greg Valentine has announced that he will not give another U.S. title shot to Ric Flair

DiBiase Reported On Way To Georgia

BY BILL APLER

ATLANTA, GA—According to sources high within the Georgia wrestling office, local promoters and North American champion Ted DiBiase have been huddling for several weeks on a contract designed to bring the young champion into the Georgia area.

While neither party would confirm nor deny the story, sources close to DiBiase indicate the champion is eager to wrestle in the area and especially eager to take on the many rulebreakers.

That source indicates it is just a matter of time before the contracts are signed and DiBiase moves into Atlanta and other Georgia wrestling hotbeds.

BY PETER KING

RICHMOND, VA—Now that Greg Valentine has the United States Heavyweight title, he is more than willing to defend it on every occasion against every challenger. Almost every challenger

"Ric Flair doesn't get any more title shots because he ain't good enough to lick my boots, much less wrestle me," said Valentine. "I gotta worry about my image, and a bum like Flair just brings me down and hampers my style. The old saying that you're only as good as the level of your competition is true, and Flair ain't good enough for the level of a bum's competition. If he wants to wrestle for a title, let him go out and prove himself. I'll still be champ when he finishes in five years."



JUST PEACHY Georgia fans are excited about the possibility of North American champ Ted DiBiase coming to their state

AROUND THE GLOBE

TOKYO, JAPAN

Although Harley Race regained his NWA title from Baba the Giant after only six days and gone back to the United States, three-time champion Baba has nothing to be ashamed of.

He is a great man

ATLANTA, GA

Mr. Wrestling I and II, reunited after quite some time, have wrestled the state tag team belts from the Assassins. "We're mighty proud of our belts," II says. "We hope to bring respect to them again."

GREENSBORO, NC

Paul Jones has signed to wrestle Gene Anderson, manager of Jimmy Snuka, Ray Stevens, and Hussein Arab. Jones, who claims Anderson interferes on behalf of his men, vows to hospitalize him

ALLENTOWN, PA

Heated words and exchanged fists have sparked a bitter rivalry between Inter-Continental champion Ken Patera and former WWF king Pedro Morales. Experts feel that if Morales can keep his temper under control, he can take the title from Patera.

MEMPHIS, TN

Eddie Gilbert and his dad, Tommy, have won the Southern tag belts from El Mongol and Killer Krupp. Although Krupp and Mongol cry "foul," Eddie and Tommy know in their hearts they won fair and square.

LOOKING AT...

Matt Brock:



FEW WRESTLERS JUMP from state to state with any effectiveness. The rigors of daily wrestling combined with the wearying challenges of varied nuts contributes to an increasing sense of grappling insanity. It takes a lot for a man to stay sane in wrestling. Staying in one area at least contributes to a sense of permanence and enables a wrestler to find a buoy of reason in a sea of bloodshed and violence.

Steve Keirn successfully made the leap from one area to another. For years, Keirn concentrated on teaming with his best friend, Mike Graham, to form a devastating tag team in Florida. After perfecting their maneuvers, Keirn and Graham captured the state's tag team title.

Even courageously defending the crown didn't completely satisfy the ambitious Keirn. As much as it hurt, Keirn knew he had to split with Graham. Both would benefit from the rigorous challenges of individual competition. With that decision painfully accepted, Keirn set out to win a title all to himself.

It took a while. The kid had to learn. He had to absorb the blows and come back by himself. There was no friendly face beyond the ropes holding out a helpful hand.

There was no partner to plot strategy with. All Keirn had was limited experience, growing ambitions, and limitless talents. That, and a well of guts an entire army could feed off of.

They zipped past Keirn like green signs on some Midwest

interstate. After a while they all looked the same. Even the scars melded into one. But Keirn kept on coming. He was learning, no matter how it hurt, no matter the multitudinous disappointments and fleeting triumphs, he kept coming, his dark eyes fixed upon the target just around the corner. Florida grew crowded. There



Harley Race grabs a handful of Steve Keirn's hair, forcing him to break his headlock. Many experts feel that Keirn will take the NWA title if he continues to progress so rapidly.

STEVE KEIRN



Steve left Florida for Georgia in quest of the state's prestigious heavyweight championship. Keirn upset Baron Von Raschke to win the title, but lost it to Dennis Condrey soon after.

were a bit too many heated feuds erupting in every arena for Keirn. He decided to move north. One state, that is. Reluctantly, Keirn accepted an invitation to wrestle in Georgia and bid his Florida fans a temporary farewell.

Keirn's eyes locked upon the Georgia Heavyweight championship belt. The diamond-studded beauty was wrapped around Baron Von Raschke's waist. But Von

Raschke wouldn't part so easily with the title.

Keirn is exactly the sort of wrestler Von Raschke despises. Steve is the antithesis of Von Raschke: young, handsome, decent, a talented scientific wrestler. For that reason alone, Von Raschke would love to destroy the young man.

They met, the two disparate forces of professional wrestling.

When it was over, Keirn triumphed and held the Georgia title in his shaking fist.

Words would fail Keirn later that night. He would sit before his locker, head bowed, lips mumbling silent thanks. Occasionally Keirn would glance up and smile. All the pain and all the years had not been in vain.

Steve Keirn was Georgia Heavyweight champion. □

Spectacular Fan Contest:

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SPECIAL ENTRY BLANK

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Age _____

Remember: Each entry blank must be accompanied by a composition of 100 words or less on "What Mil Mascaras Stands For."

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THINK OF IT! The opportunity to win the mask of one of the true immortals of wrestling—Mil Mascaras. What an exciting prospect! And now *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* and the great masked man himself bring this opportunity to the fans.

"Yes, I wanted to do this again for all my loyal fans," Mil explained when he dropped the masks off at our New York office. "What is a wrestler without his fans? Nothing. Everything we are is owed to our loyal fans."

This annual contest was Mascaras' idea. Several years ago, Mascaras approached the editors and asked if there was some way he could give away one of his masks to a fan.

"I didn't have to do it. No one forced me to do it," said Mascaras. "But this was something I wanted to do out of the appreciation of my heart. Every time I climb into the ring, my fans are with me. Through good and bad, they are always there, always behind me, always cheering me."

"I didn't want to simply give out autographed pictures. I wanted to give something very personal and important to me. I

know a gift is important no matter the value. But nothing is as important to me in my life than my masks.

"My masks are everything to me. I live and breathe through my masks. They are as much a part of me as my arms or legs. I couldn't live without my masks."

"Since my fans are so very important, I thought I needed to find some way to reward them and demonstrate my appreciation for all they ever did. Thus several years ago I started this contest. Fortunately the editors were kind enough to use their magazine as the base for this contest."

"Every year, I am excited to learn who won the masks. I truly believe I am as thrilled as the actual winners. Why? Because I know that I have made some fan happy almost as much as he or she made me happy."

The requirements of the contest are quite simple. Considerable thought went into the specifics of this contest.

Many ideas were bandied about. Several were rejected outright. A Mil Mascaras puzzle was debated, but rejected. The editors thought of a quiz, but decided against it.

Finally, we turned to Mascaras.

"I think a composition would be a very nice idea," said the masked man. "I'm particularly curious about what my fans think of me. That's why I made this suggestion."

To qualify for an authentic Mil Mascaras mask, you must write a composition of 100 words or less describing "What Mil Mascaras Stands For."

The essay must be neat and printed. In addition, please fill out the entry blank giving your name, address, age, and telephone number. It is important this information be written clearly.

The winner of the contest will be notified by telephone and announced in the April 1981 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

Good luck!

RICK STEAMBOAT'S OWN STORY



BY RICK STEAMBOAT

WHEN THE EDITORS of Pro Wrestling Illustrated asked me to do this story, I hesitated. I mean, how do you actually explain the qualities that attract you to a particular person? I found it difficult, but after pondering for a while, I decided to write this article. I felt I owed it to my fans.

It's a lot simpler for me to keep talking into this tape recorder and let my innermost thoughts come out. Okay, here I go.

First of all, a woman must have a mind. No airheads need apply, please. A lot of guys want some dummy who'll smile and giggle and echo whatever they say. To me, that's real boring. I want a woman who'll be able to keep up with me. Now, I'm not saying I want a Ph.D. or anything like that. But if I say something, I don't want the girl to just echo my words. I want her to elaborate on my idea and add something unique. I want a give and take relationship, with each of us pushing thoughts, ideas, and concepts toward each other.

"WHAT I LOOK FOR IN A WOMAN"

Haven't all you girls out there always wondered what Rick Steamboat looks for in a girl? Is it simply looks? Personality? A shapely figure? Wit? Intelligence? Now Steamboat describes his ideal woman in his very own words.



Rick Steamboat is very proud of his Mid-Atlantic tag team belt, but he is equally proud of a necklace given to him by a female fan in Hawaii (above). Rick tries to forget about the violence of his profession (below) when on a date



But a mind without a soul isn't good enough. Otherwise you only have this brain without anything feeding into it. Emotions are very

important. Now this is kind of a hazy area for me, okay?

I want someone who's sweet enough without being a pile of

mush, someone who's firm without being tough, someone understanding without always agreeing with me. I want to be able to babble on and on without fear she'll ever go blank on me and just smile without the foggiest idea what I'm talking about.

Courage is important to me. No, not rashness or brazenness. But I'm into a lot of athletic hobbies. I like to surf, ski, play tennis. I really like water sports, and other outdoor activities. I don't want some pretty girl who's going to think that I thought of any little chance or fear she'll muss up her hair.

I want a girl willing to take a little risk, experiment, to soar to new heights and abandon suffocating past fears. I don't care whether she eventually wants to share all these activities with me, but I do want her to be willing to try.

Of course, it'd be nice if she liked everything I liked. But I want her to have her own hobbies and activities that I could get into and earn from her.

I love to read mysteries. It would be fun if I could find a woman who'd help me unravel the mysteries before I finished the book. We could sit in front of the fireplace, sip wine, and read and analyze together. See, that'd be something very mellow, yet really fine. I don't know if I could find a woman who'd be into that.

I also enjoy going to the theater. Not heavy stuff, I'm not into any of that really morbid stuff with people killing themselves and wondering if there is a God.

I like a good comedy. Even more, I like a musical comedy. I really enjoy Neil Simon. I've also become an "Odd Couple" freak, and I'd like a girl with a good sense of humor.

I love the sound of a girl laughing, and I love to hear a really good joke. I've got a kind of offbeat sense of humor, always looking for the absurd aspect of life. Most

'Continued on page 67'

KING'S COURT

(Continued from Page 6)

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Race throws Baba over with a suplex while maintaining a grip on the champion's torso. Moments later Harley was a five-time NWA champion

and have me deported so he
wouldn't have to wrestle me again?
But fortunately, I was able to get
him before I left the country. And
of course I beat him."

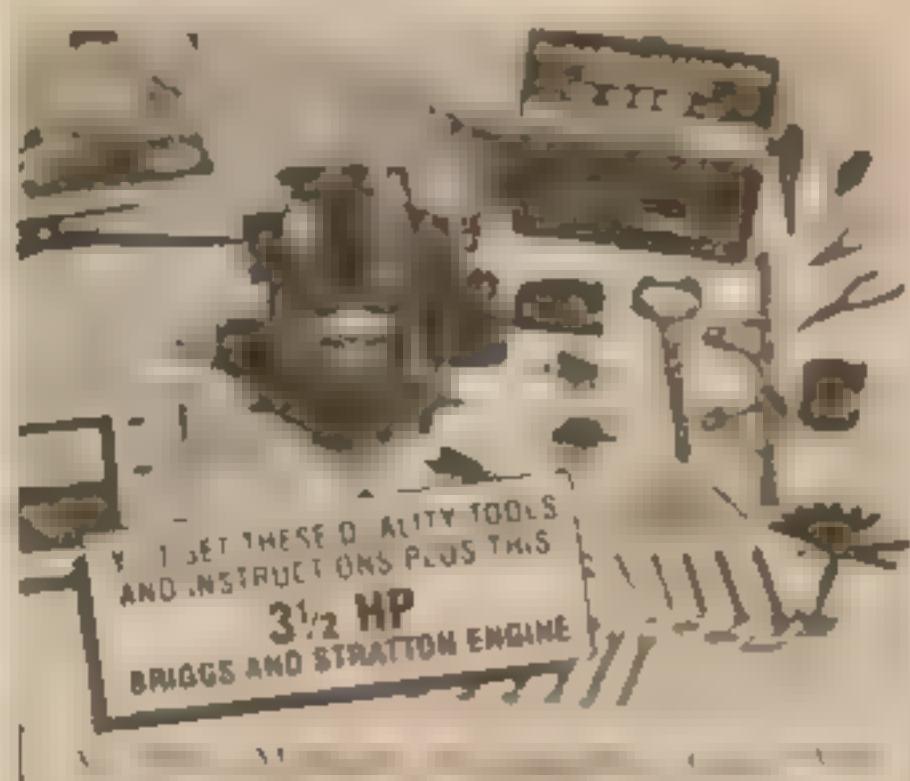
Many people feel a really great
champion would not have to win
the title five times. A really great
champion would win the belt once
and never lose it. I asked Race to
comment on that

"It just goes to show the extent
of ignorance in this world. Look, I
wrestle five, sometimes six times a
week. How can I be expected to
get up for every match? Against
Baba, I had to wrestle him the day I
arrived in Japan. I had just traveled
thousands of miles. I hadn't slept in
over 36 hours. I could have backed
out of that match, but I didn't. And
I lost like a champion. Six days

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later, though, I won like a great champion."

The doctor came into the room and cast a wary eye on Race's arm. After a few moments of poking and probing, the doctor told Race he had a pulled muscle. He recommended Race rest for three weeks.

Race looked at the doctor and laughed. "Doc," he said, "I'm the heavyweight champion of the world. I don't have time to rest." □

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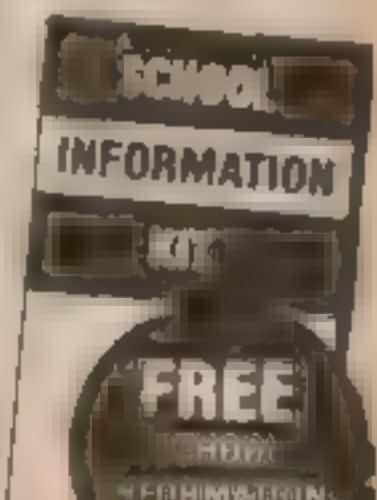
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DRESSING ROOM CONFIDENTIAL

(Continued from Page 10)



Ole Anderson regrets the problems he and his brothers have caused for their parents, but nothing has been done to resolve the situation.

lesson of loyalty many years ago when Lars was only 10 years old and tried to save the weakling Grushin Brothers from the town bullies—Ole and Gene Anderson. Ole and Gene left the Grushins alone but beat Lars to a bloody pulp. Lars came running to his father for help only to be punished for not helping his brothers.

"Your family comes first," I told him at the time," Mr. Anderson said angrily. "If I were speaking to him, I'd tell him that again."

Mrs. Anderson remembers "Yes, the Grushin brothers," she said. "They're both lawyers now. Lars showed a lot of guts sticking up for them against his older brothers. He was right then, and he's right now."

Who is right and who is wrong is beginning to lose relevance. What's important is the breakup of a family. And if the Anderson brothers don't resolve their differences for their own sake, they should at least think about their parents who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and should be afforded the opportunity to celebrate their 51st.

ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from Page 12)

winner-take-all. We flipped a coin to see who would gain first possession. We won and the game began. I hit the first shot—a 15-foot jump shot—and the fierce action went something like this for the next several minutes: *Farhood feeds Saks inside, hook shot over Volkoff—good... Saks tries a long jump shot, hits the front of the rim, Koloff rebounds... Volkoff double-pumps on Saks and hits a five-foot bank shot... Koloff drills one in from the foul line... Koloff tries another and misses, Farhood snatches the rebound, dribbles to the foul line, shoots—twine time... Saks works a pick-and-roll with Farhood for an easy layup... Farhood misses a one-hander and Volkoff rebounds... Volkoff hits two straight jump shots*

It went on like that—close and rough—until we led 14-11. We had the ball. One more point and we were winners. I tried to pass to Stu under the basket, but Koloff elbowed me in the ribs and the ball went out of bounds. I complained, but the Russians ignored me. Then Volkoff literally shoved Saks out of his way and dunked the ball. Finally, when Koloff hit me with a forearm across the chest to give him room to make a shot (which made the score 14-13), we had had enough. I looked at Saks. He looked at me. We weren't going to lose because of intimidation

I took the ball, threw it at Koloff, and screamed, "You can have your lousy game, damn cheaters." We left the park

Without Saks and me knowing it at the time, Brock had taught us a valuable lesson. "Once a rulebreaker, always a rule-breaker," the saying goes. How true it is, how true it is! □

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(Continued from Page 25)

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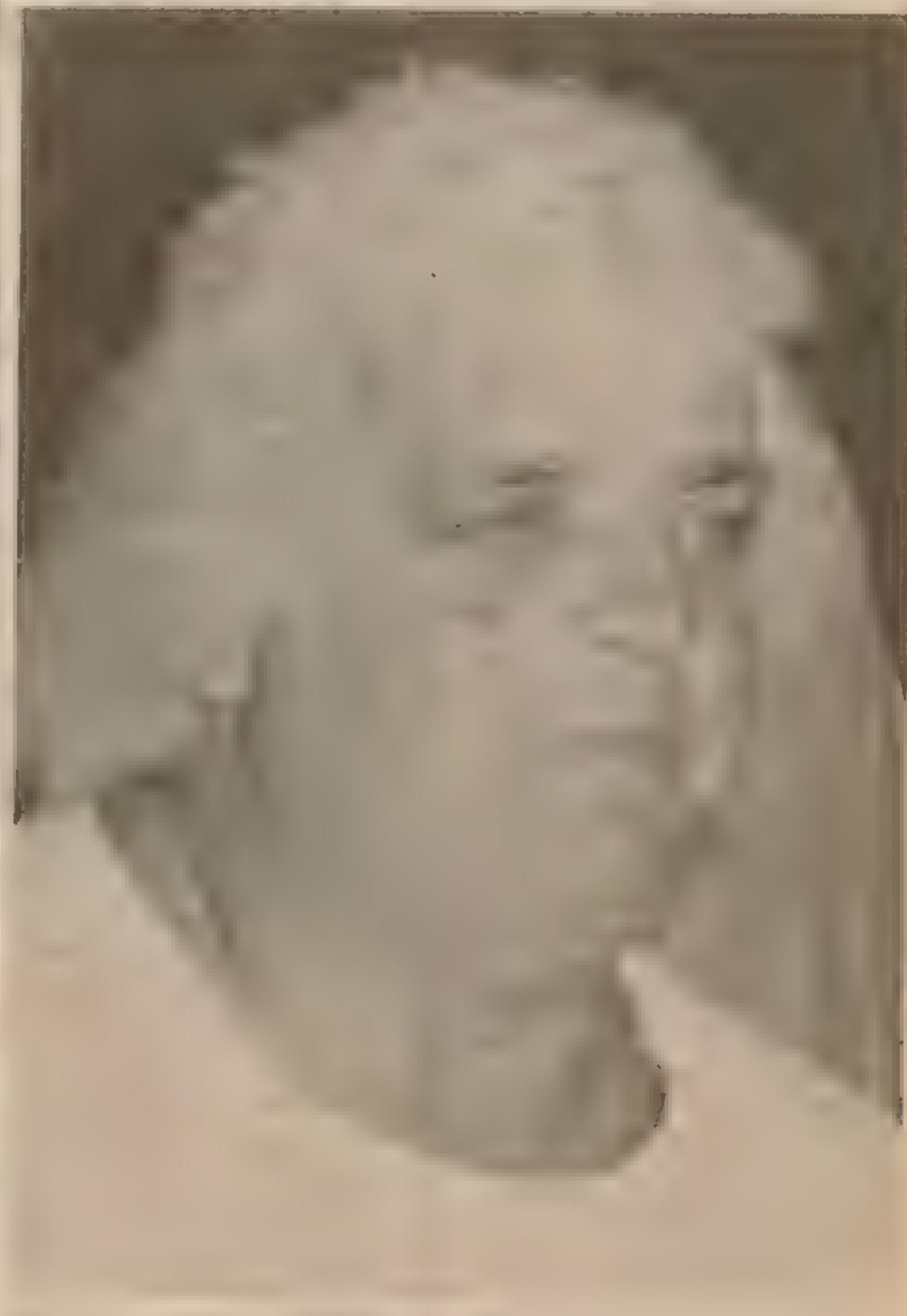


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prestigious championships around. And Slater's lousy way of wrestlin' makes me angry.

BROCK: You're very bitter, aren't you?

RHODES: Kinda. I feel I got



"I don't like hearin' people say what a great non-champion Dusty Rhodes is. I am good enough to be champion and as soon as I find a world champion willin' to wrestle me and abide by the decision . . . I will be world champion again."

the short-end of the stick down in Tampa and feel I should be champion. I don't like hearin' people say what a great non-champion Dusty Rhodes is. I am good enough to be champion and as soon as I find a world champion willin' to wrestle me and abide by the decision, without any of this garbage Race pulled, I will be world champion again.

APTER: Right now the Sir Oliver Humperdink family is running amuck in Florida.

RHODES: For a while.

APTER: Meaning?

RHODES: Meaning give a guy like Humperdink enough rope and he'll hang himself sure enough. Someone that vicious and that greedy must step on the wrong toes. He already made me and Bugsy McGraw his sworn enemies. Watch what happens in his own family.

MORGENSTEIN: Are you insinuating there'll be a revolt against Humperdink?

RHODES: Wrestlers aren't people to Humperdink, they're bank accounts. His eyes turn green when he looks at one of his people. Soon as that guy slips a little or loses some matches, Humperdink'll dump him. And that guy'll turn on him and fight him back, knowin' the secrets. I don't give Humperdink much longer as an important figure in Florida wrestling.

BROCK: How do you feel about wrestlers who try and go straight after a career as a rulebreaker?

RHODES: I think they should be given a chance. Be skeptical, sure, but give 'em a chance. You gotta forgive and forget in this sport.

BROCK: Except for Harley Race.

RHODES: (Winks) Exactly. □

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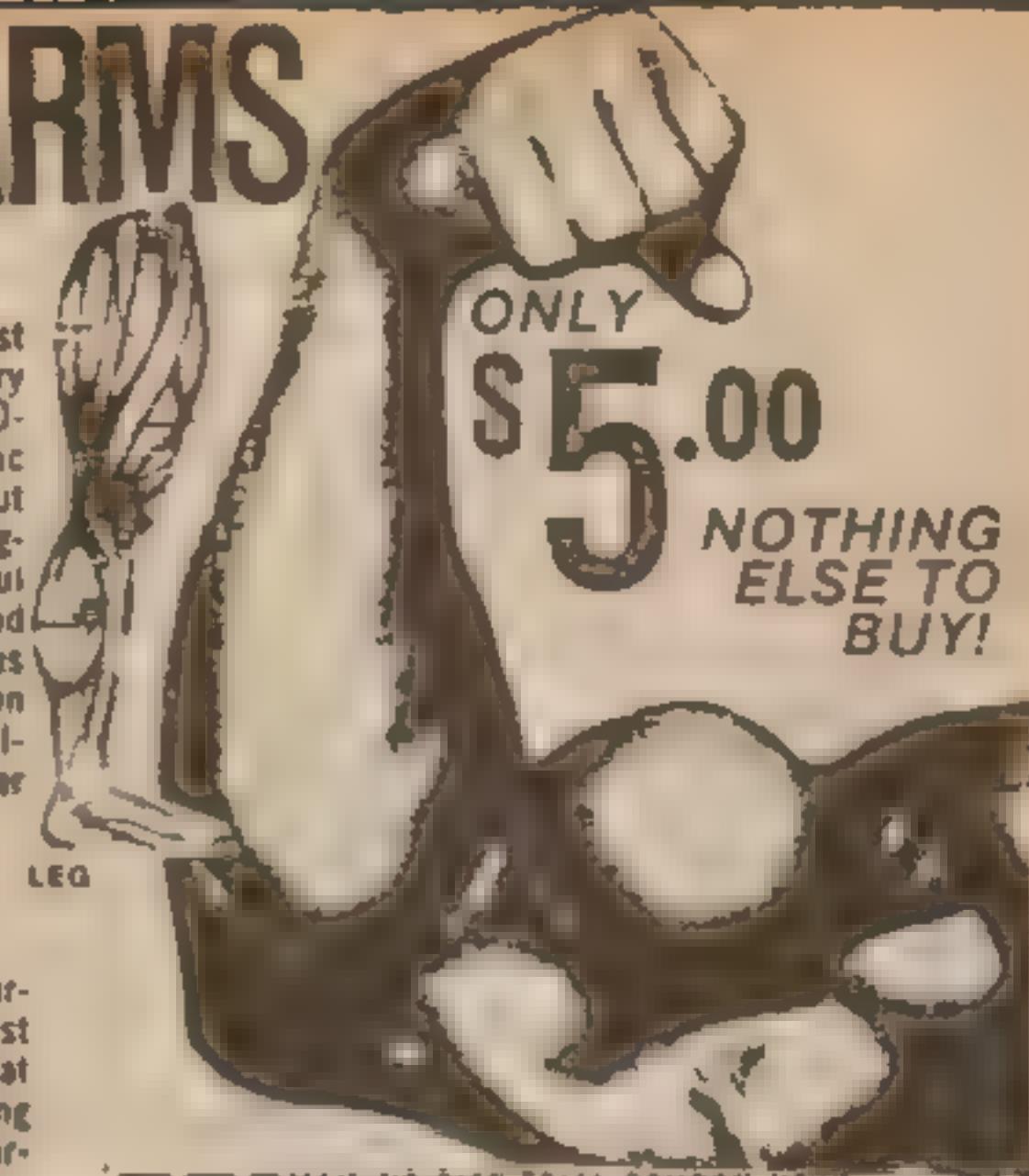
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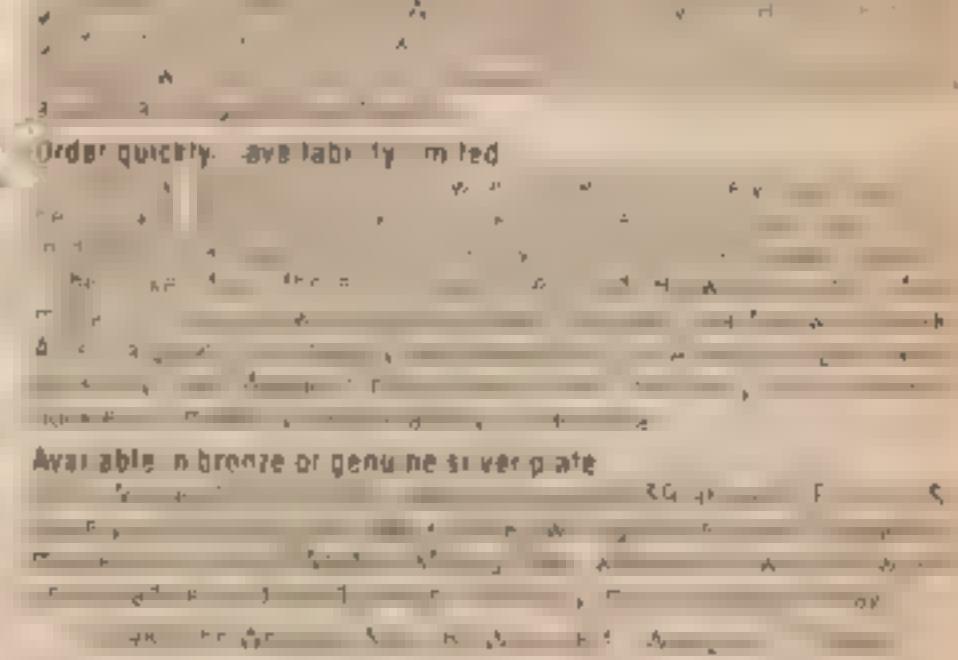
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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29)

MIL MASCARAS

"Yes, I enjoy wrestling in Texas very, very much. In this area, I've encountered many new challenges and found some of them rewarding. In other cases, I have found my opponents to be of vile, unscrupulous morals totally unacceptable to the wrestling ways I follow and expect others to obey."



PAUL JONES

"I don't expect the Mid-Atlantic fans to pull me to their hearts as if nothing ever happened. I'm the first to admit what I did was wrong. I apologized. Now I want the fans to judge me and watch what I do. All I ask is they be fair and open-minded and, eventually, trust me again."



JOHN STUDD

"What the hell is a creep like Tito Santana doin' in the AWA? Guy is a loser who couldn't cut it in the WWF and hadda lean on his buddy Putski for support. We don't need more lames in the AWA 'cause we already got more than our share. I'll see to it that Santana's stay is short and unpleasant."



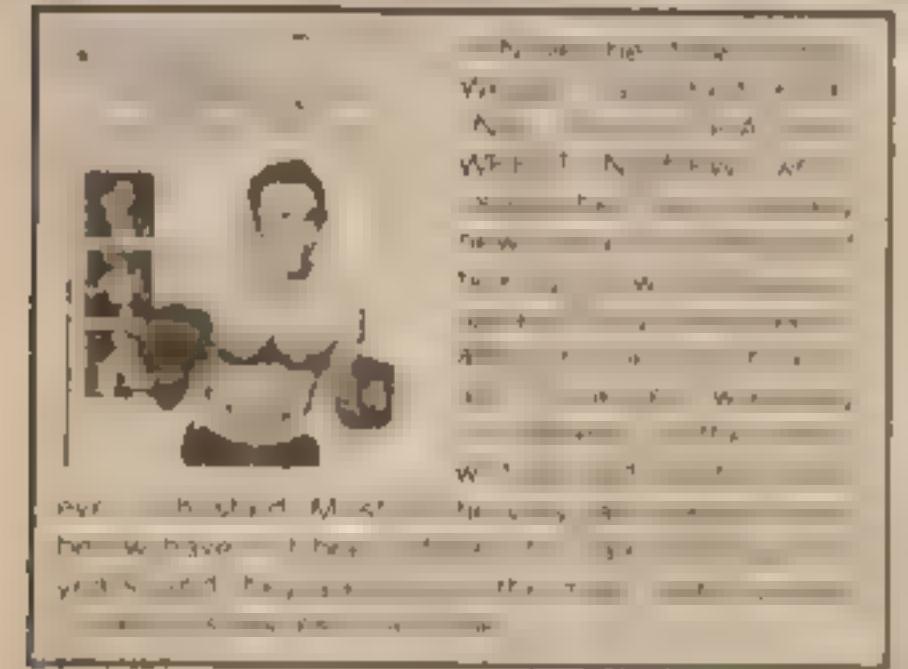
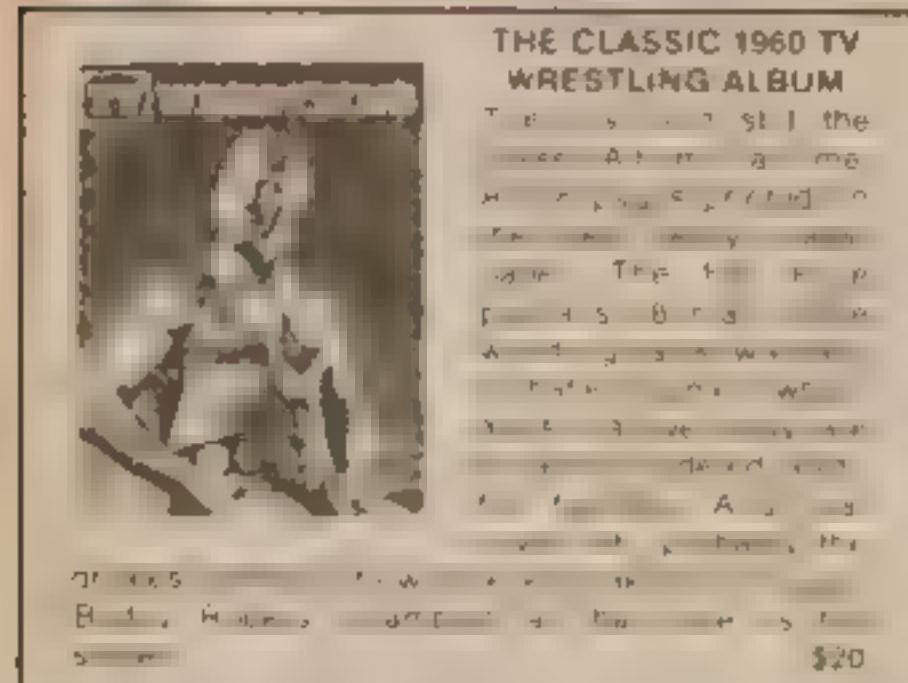
STAN STASIAK

"I don't think I ever enjoyed holdin' a title like I do wrestlin' with the Texas Brass Knuckles title. I think it's the best title around, makes you work up a sweat and constantly forces you to improve your game. All I want is to go down in history as the greatest Brass Knuckles champ the world has ever seen." □



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SECRET WINKER

(Continued from Page 28)

and Heenan patrolled opposite sides of the locker room. Occasionally their strained breaths would exhale a grunt or mutter. Flashing eyes would dart to the other side of the room, accuse, and return to some invisible spot on the floor.



Heenan holds Gagne in his corner and calls Bockwinkel over. Nick refused the command and went after Crusher.

Finally, Heenan walked over to Bockwinkel and whispered. Bockwinkel growled, yet didn't move away. Again Heenan whispered. Bockwinkel's lips formed a faint smile.

Presently conspiratorial humor gushed from their private little corner. Compliments were exchanged and lavish praise applied. Once more, they were good buddies, a terrific team.

BACKLUND

(Continued from Page 41)

clear of all the tensions and turmoils that had filled it. All that he cared or thought about was the upcoming brawl.

From the first moment, Backlund was spectacular. He moved with grace, ease, and purpose. Muraco was confronted by his foe's brilliance. There was never any doubt that Bob would successfully defend his title. On this night, not a wrestler alive could best Bob Backlund.

Afterwards, he once again got in his car, this time heading north.



A proud Bob Backlund acknowledges the cheers of the Florida fans as he once again retains his WWF belt.

There was no reason not to stop along the way, take it slow and easy. Bob did some sightseeing, traveled the backroads, and arrived back in New York in great shape.

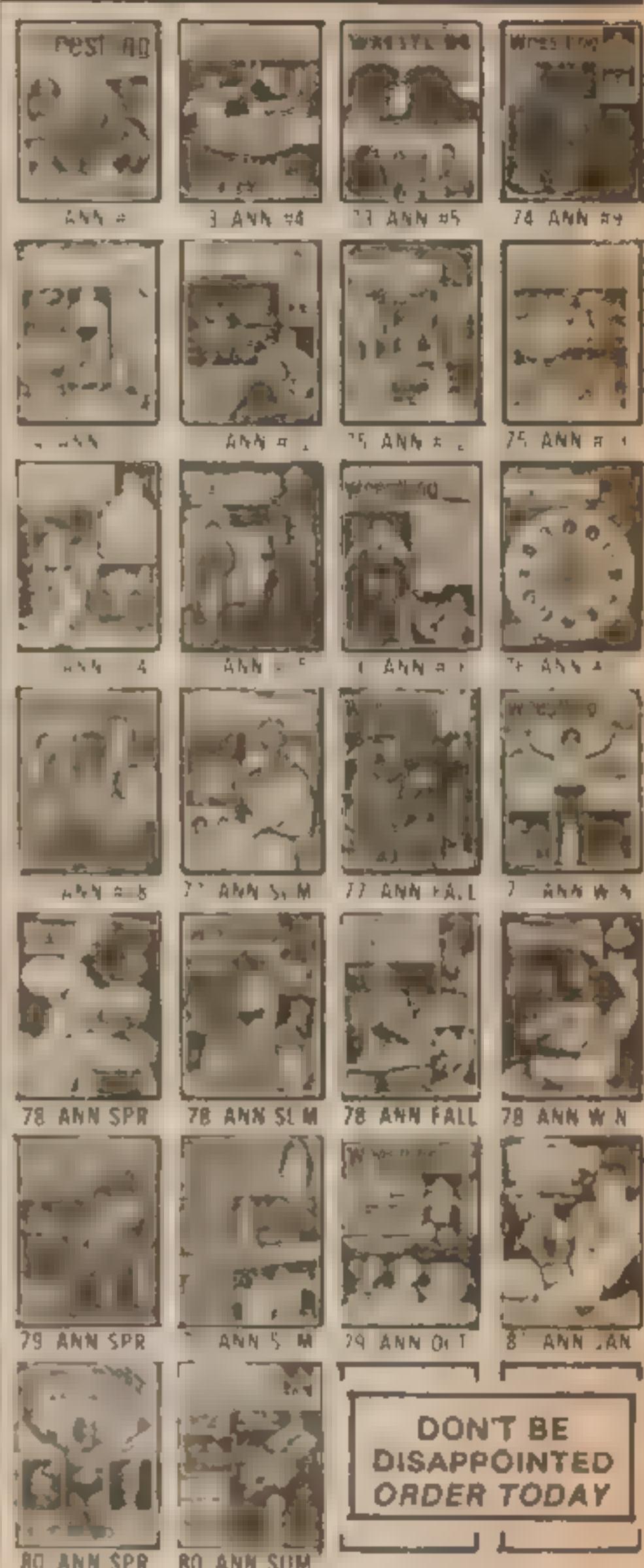
He left his problems behind him. □

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1976 YEARBOOK #16

1976 YEARBOOK #17

1977 YEARBOOK SPR

1977 YEARBOOK SUM

1977 YEARBOOK FALL

1977 YEARBOOK WIN

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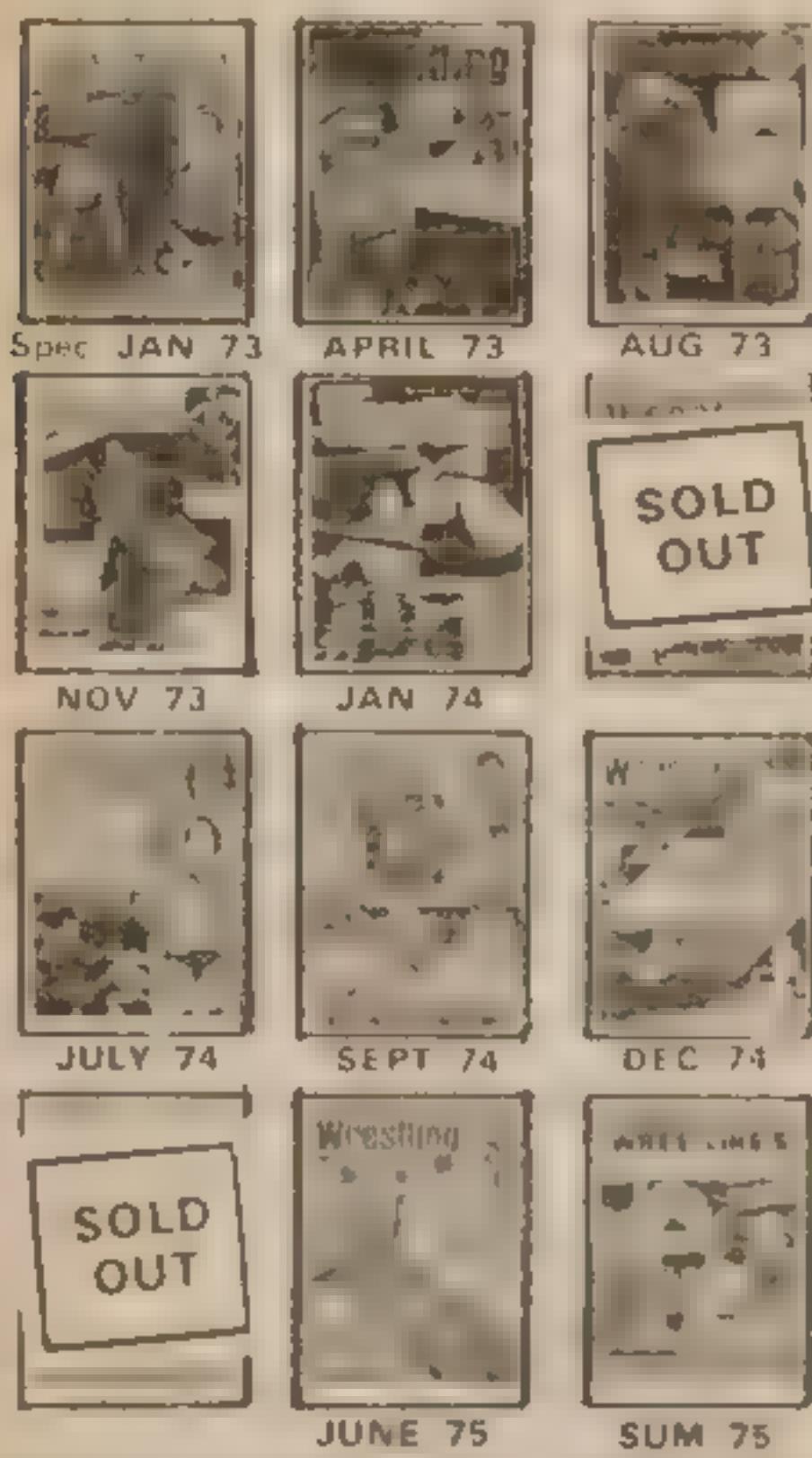
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Steve Keirn

(Continued from Page 31)

men knew why.

Steve's face told the sad story. More exactly, his eyes revealed the answer. Looking in the eyes of the other three wrestlers, one could see a hatred that was frightening. Steve's eyes told of a pride and professionalism. This wasn't Steve's battle and everyone knew it.

There was no basis for a rivalry between Keirn and the Assassins.

The conflict belonged to II and Mr. Wrestling, and that's who had to settle it. Steve could only sympathize but never really participate. As Steve said a week after the match, "The war must finally be won by Mr. Wrestling and Mr. Wrestling II."

Mr. Wrestling II agreed. He would rather not talk about it, as he feels the situation may be too complex to explain. The only



Assassin #1 grabs Keirn around the neck in an attempt to break a leglock (above). II digs his knee into Assassin #2's thigh and twists his foot (below). Keirn feels II should team with Mr. Wrestling, rather than himself.



reason he's trying to explain is because he feels Steve is owed a public explanation.

"To wrestle the Assassins," he declares, "you have to hate them. The kind of hatred I'm talking about can only be earned by wrestling them often. Mr. Wrestling and I have done that. Fate prevented Steve from having those matches. Now, I think it's too late. The Assassins are so good, only those who know and hate them well can possibly beat them."

"Steve is my friend. I hope he always will be. He's just not the man I need to humiliate the Assassins. Maybe in time he could be, but I just don't have that time. The Assassins have to be defeated immediately."

The sorrow in II's voice as he says this is heartbreaking. You can tell he has searched for some other solution to his problem. He enjoys working with Steve, respects the man enormously, and is excited by the brilliance they displayed in the gym. He wants to wrestle with Keirn, but knows it isn't possible.

A few days later, Mr. Wrestling and Mr. Wrestling II were back in the gymnasium. Standing outside the ring was Steve Keirn, giving them advice and criticism. It was something Steve felt he had to do. It was also something Steve wanted to do.

As he watched his two friends, Steve knew he could never participate in their quest. They had forged their resolve over many matches. It was their war to win or lose. He could only wish them well. □

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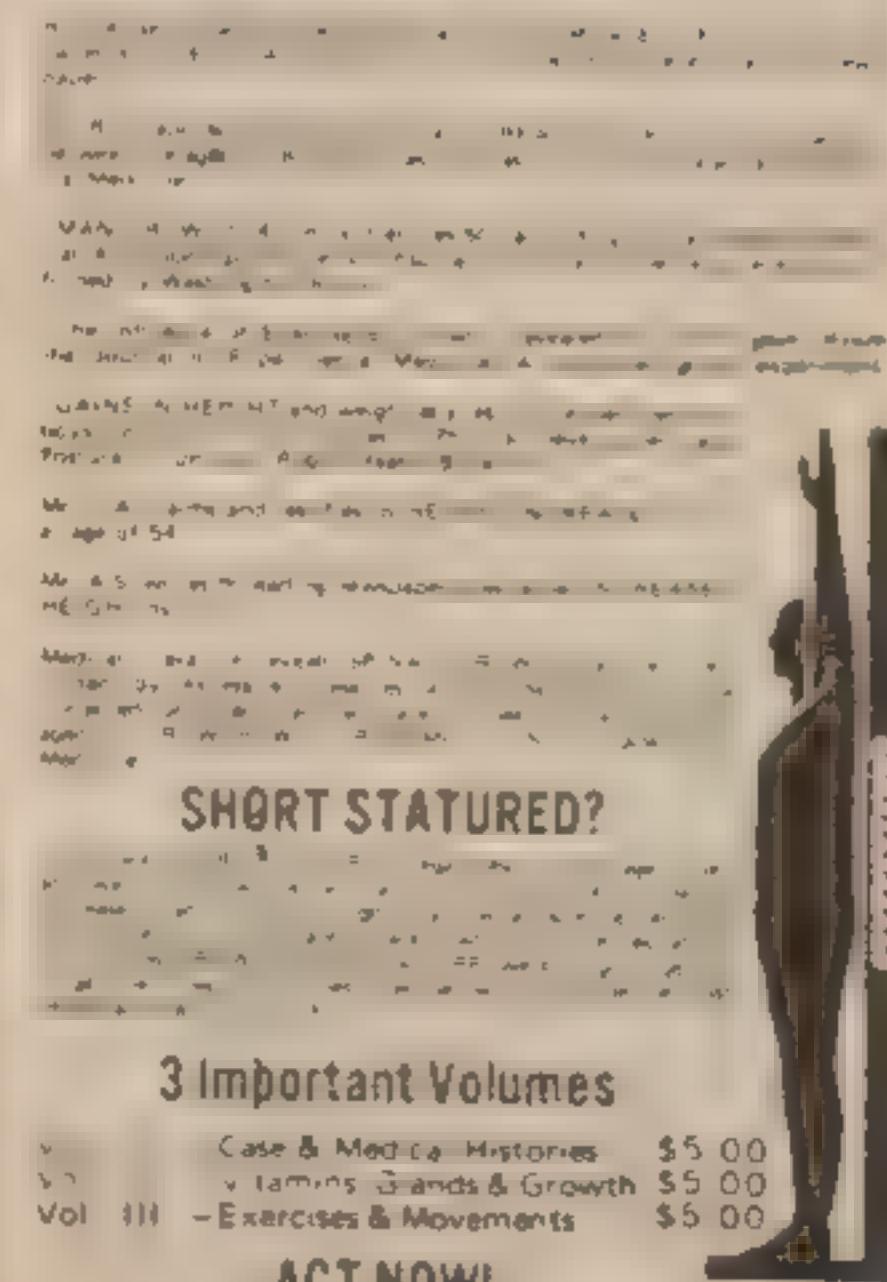
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MORGENSTEIN REPORT

(Continued from Page 18)

KEIRN WINS, LOSES GEORGIA CHAMPIONSHIP

Well, well, I had to put aside all journalistic impartiality and explode with a delighted laugh when I heard Baron Von Raschke lost the Georgia Heavyweight title to Steve Keirn. Of all the rulebreakers in that area, Von Raschke has to be the most obnoxious. He loves to brag about his invincibility. He loves to brag how tough and mean and talented he is. All Keirn has to do was respond to each of Von Raschke's sadistic moves with a polished, scientific maneuver. And Keirn kept his poise. Unfortunately, Keirn couldn't keep his belt. In one of his first title defenses, Keirn lost the



title to Dennis Condrey, a rule-breaker new to the Georgia area. Ringsiders report Condrey all but stole Keirn's title with an assortment of illegal tactics. Although Steve Keirn vows to get his title back, I foresee a long—and inglorious—reign for Dennis Condrey.

VALENTINE AND FLAIR, AGAIN

Okay, guys, time to end the feud. I don't care which way you go anyway. Either Flair

reverts to rulebreaking, or Valentine searches his soul to convert to scientific wrestling. In either case, you should end your feud. Remember, you were once friends. Nothing can ever be achieved by this endless war except the inevitable destruction of one of your careers. As long as there is wrestling, there will be bitter feuds. But after a while, the initial reasons behind the feud become buried beneath a pile of hatred. Sometimes principals can't recall why they hate their foes. I believe Flair and Valentine are far too talented to waste their respective energies on such a self-defeating battle. I think wrestling needs their robust skills, and there is no finer way to harness their energies than for them to form a tag team. Again. □



RICK STEAMBOAT

(Continued from Page 49)

women, heck, most people don't really seem to laugh at the things I do. Just the other day, I became hysterical over the way the jar of peanut butter looked in my refrigerator. Most people would look at me like I'm a total nut. I want a woman to understand and laugh right along with me.

Now, I haven't talked about what she looks like, my perfect woman. First off, I don't like a lot of makeup on a girl. Okay, maybe just a little bit of lipstick and maybe just a teensy-weensy bit of eye makeup. But that's all. Too much makeup turns me off.

I like long hair, not too long, but so it falls down around her shoulders. I must admit I've gone out with more brunettes than blondes, but I like both, and I

always liked red hair, too.

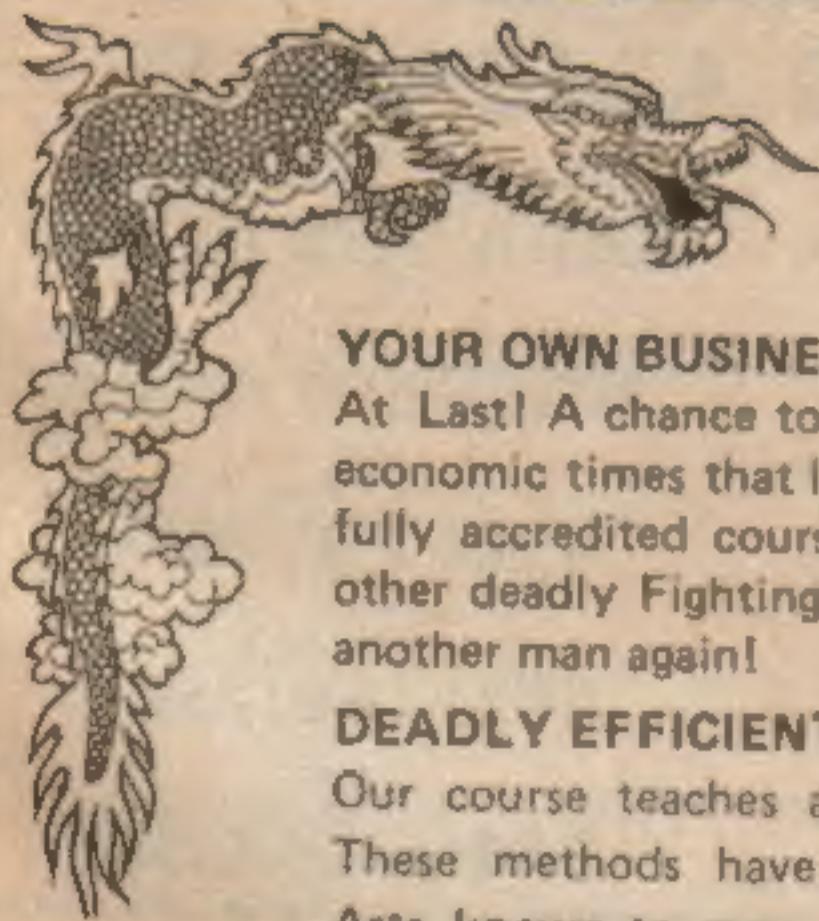
I don't like really tall women, kind of in-between, not too short or I lose them. I like them slender, kinda curvy, nice legs, nice clean skin.

I also like straight hair with just a hint of curve and big eyes. Okay, I'll climb out on the limb and say I'm a sucker for big green eyes. They make my heart beat quicker.

So there I have it. The perfect woman, according to Rick Steamboat. I don't know if she exists.

But trying to find her is almost as important to me as winning the NWA title. □

Though far from vain, Steamboat still makes sure his appearance is good before the start of each bout.



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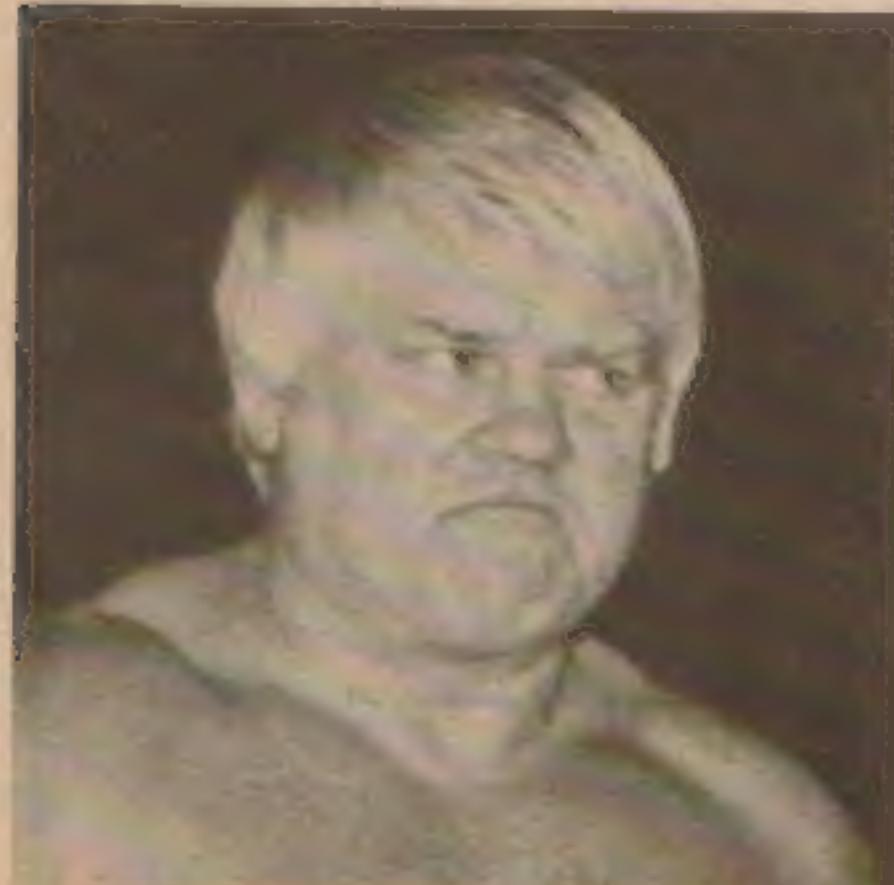
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2	SGT. SLAUGHTER	7	TONY ATLAS
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5	PEDRO MORALES	10	RICK MARTEL



TED DiBIASE

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

1	HARLEY RACE (Champion)	6	BABA THE GIANT
2	GREG VALENTINE	7	HUSSEIN ARAB
3	DICK SLATER	8	KEN PATERA
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AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

1	VERNE GAGNE (Champion)	6	DINO BRAVO
2	NICK BOCKWINKEL	7	JESSE VENTURA
3	CRUSHER	8	GREG GAGNE
4	CRUSHER BLACKWELL	9	TITO SANTANA
5	MAD DOG VACHON	10	JOHN STUDD

RatingS

TAG TEAMS

1 THE SAMOANS	6 TERRY GORDY & BUDDY ROBERTS
2 RAY STEVENS & JIMMY SNUKA	7 THE ASSASSINS
3 JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS	8 KERRY VON ERICH & EL HALCON
4 MR. WRESTLING I & II	9 RICK STEAMBOAT & JAY YOUNGBLOOD
5 JERRY BRISCO & DICK MURDOCH	10 BULLDOG BROWER & STAN STASIAK

MOST POPULAR

1 ANDRE THE GIANT	6 MR. WRESTLING II
2 BRUNO SAMMARTINO	7 IVAN PUTSKI
3 DUSTY RHODES	8 MIL MASCARAS
4 RIC FLAIR	9 RICK STEAMBOAT
5 BOB BACKLUND	10 TED DIBIASE



MR. WRESTLING II

MOST HATED

1 LARRY ZBYSZKO	6 NICK BOCKWINKEL
2 KEN PATERA	7 HARLEY RACE
3 ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER	8 GREG VALENTINE
4 MARK LEWIN	9 KILLER BROOKS
5 HULK HOGAN	10 BUDDY ROBERTS



KILLER BROOKS